

The ANIMATOR

Before CGI, there was **RAY HARRYHAUSEN**.

For a generation raised on computer-generated digital effects in movies, stop-motion animation is an antiquated art form relegated to the dusty reels of a forgotten Hollywood. But once upon a time, fantasy relied upon one man to create magic on the big screen: Ray Harryhausen. Apprenticed to Willis O'Brien, the animator who first brought King Kong to life in 1933, Harryhausen's career spanned over 60 years and 26 films. Steven Spielberg, James Cameron, Peter Jackson and George Lucas are among the many Hollywood luminaries who cite the work of Harryhausen as a major influence on their respective careers.

This month, Via Vision is releasing four of his classics in a 4-disc Blu-ray and DVD set, and with *STACK* home to several Harryhausen aficionados, we decided to pull our favourite cinematic moments from the four films in the collection.

THE 7TH VOYAGE OF SINBAD (1958)

TARO VS. CYCLOPS

The Cyclops has always been a personal favourite Harryhausen creation, but he was no match for the sorcerer Sokurah's Taro – a powerful fire-free dragon – unleashed by Sinbad to fight the one-eyed giant. After

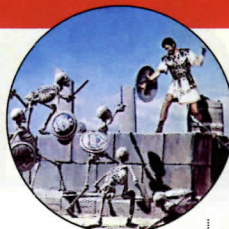


wrestling for 30 seconds, the Cyclops falls to the ground and the dragon snaps for the jugular; in a flash, it's all over. With the dragon turning towards Sinbad and his crew, it is subsequently felled by a bolt fired from a giant crossbow.

JASON AND THE ARGONAUTS (1963)

THE SKELETON MELEE

Arguably the greatest Harryhausen sequence ever committed to film pitches an army of animated skeletons against Jason and two cohorts. A desperate battle of survival ensues where blade and bone clash across ancient Greek ruins. Outnumbered, Jason's wingmen pay the ultimate price, falling to the sword. Sensing an opportunity, Jason makes his way to cover at the edge of the cliff, driving skeletons with a shield before leaping into the sea. Hey, skeletons can't swim.



Although impressive, it's the captivating dance that Kali performs for Koura as she descends down a set of stone steps that remains the highlight. Indian dancer Surya Kumari was enlisted to perform the movements with a student strapped to her back to give Harryhausen the outline required to animate the sequence.

SINBAD AND THE EYE OF THE TIGER (1977)

THE MINOTON

Undoubtedly the best creation in the film, the huge, bronze, humanoid and bull-like creature called Minoton is used to row the

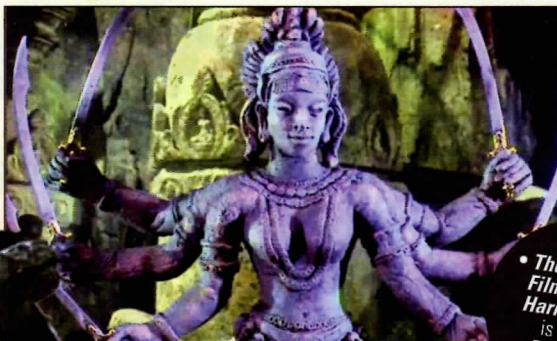


evil Zenobia's ship in pursuit of Sinbad. When spies attempt to get close to the vessel, their boat is rammed and a sole survivor cries out to be rescued. Summoned by Zenobia, Minoton steps forward, picks up a spear and skewers the unfortunate man before lifting him above his head. He momentarily holds his trophy for Zenobia to admire before discarding the cadaver overboard. ☹

THE GOLDEN VOYAGE OF SINBAD (1973)

KALI'S DANCE

Forget the frenetic sword fight Sinbad engages in with the six-armed Kali, a statue that comes to life after Prince Koura, played by Tom Baker, throws a potion over it.



• The Fantastic Films Of Ray Harryhausen is out on DVD & BD on Aug 19

